CR7 Keep Rivers Wild

This is in response to comments concerned with preserving wild and scenic rivers and restoring the free flow of rivers in the Program area. Some comments spoke of the aesthetics of free flowing streams while others emphasized the joy of white water rafting and other recreational activities. Many comments said free flowing rivers should be preserved for future generations. Others said river flows should be increased.

The CALFED Program recognizes the value of free flowing streams both to the ecosystem and to the public as a whole. Therefore, the Program has committed to no new on-stream surface storage. Instead CALFED will focus on off-stream reservoir sites for any new surface storage. The Program will, however, consider the expansion of existing on-stream reservoirs such as Shasta Lake. Any expansion of Shasta Lake would be in compliance with California Public Resources Code Section 5093.542 which protects the free flowing status of McCloud River, a designated wild and scenic river that flows into Lake Shasta.

The restoration of in-stream flows and Delta outflow is one of the focuses of the Ecosystem Restoration Program. The ERP proposes target in-stream flows for each stream or river tributary to the Delta. These targets are organized by ecological management zones.

The Ecosystem Restoration Program will consider removing some small diversion or debris dams. Dams on Butte Creek have already been removed. The program is evaluating additional opportunities for dam removal on Butte Creek, Clear Creek, and Mill Creek. The CALFED Integrated Storage Investigation will evaluate the feasibility of modifying or removing some small dams which impede flow and serve as barriers to fish migration. The Upper Yuba River Studies Program will also focus on opportunities for dam removal.

The Program does not intend to remove any of the state's major supply dams. The multiple public benefits provided by most existing dams--water supply, flood storage, hydropower, recreation--simply preclude their removal. Dams have reduced the natural variability of flows in Bay-Delta tributaries to the detriment of the ecosystem, but it is possible to re-operate reservoir releases so that they restore or mimic natural flow variability. In this manner, existing reservoirs can still provide water supply, flood storage, hydropower, and recreational benefits, but they can also enhance the public benefits of a healthier ecosystem by approximating a more natural flow regime.

For additional information please refer to Ecosystem Restoration Program Volumes I - II in the appendices to the PEIS/EIR. For information on the Integrated Storage Investigation please refer to the Phase II report.

November 15, 1999

E-038228